

## **Appendix L Local Government Services in the Delta (Part Three)**

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## Introduction

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This appendix presents existing conditions associated with selected local government services in the Legal Delta, focusing on 1) law enforcement, 2) fire protection / first response, and 3) educational services. The section first considers the overall framework for the provision these public services then provides a high-level assessment of services in unincorporated Sacramento and Yolo Counties, where the Legacy Communities are located.

The local governance structure in the Delta is complex, with a multifaceted network of counties, cities, special districts, state agencies, and other service providers. To establish existing conditions associated with government services in the Delta, the assessment relies on budgetary documents and interviews. Due to the rural nature of the area and limited data regarding the government services in the Delta, the analysis relies heavily on information derived from interviews. Through this process, the Economic Sustainability Plan endeavors to identify the following:

- Service providers
- Services provided
- Service levels
- Service funding sources

## Overview of Public Services

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California's local governance system relies on counties, cities, special districts, and school districts to provide public services. The delivery of services in California is generally structured as follows:

- **Counties** serve as agents of the state for social services and health programs; provide countywide services (e.g., jails, district attorney, assessor, and elections); and supply municipal services in unincorporated areas. In general, California counties are funded primarily by intergovernmental transfers (primarily from the state and federal sources) as well as property, sales, and other taxes.<sup>1</sup>
- **Cities** control local land use and municipal services. Some cities provide a wide range of municipal services (e.g., police, fire, parks, and library) while other cities rely on their county or special districts to provide some of these services. City funding generally comes from local taxes, fees, and service charges.
- **Special Districts** usually provide a single service (e.g., fire protection or waste disposal) within specified boundaries that often cross city and county borders. To pay for their regular operations, special districts generate revenue from taxes, benefit assessments, and service charges.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Legislative Analysts Office  
([http://www.lao.ca.gov/handouts/Conf\\_Comm/2010/Overview\\_CA\\_Local\\_Gov\\_6\\_15\\_10.pdf](http://www.lao.ca.gov/handouts/Conf_Comm/2010/Overview_CA_Local_Gov_6_15_10.pdf))

<sup>2</sup> California Special Districts Association  
([http://www.cstda.net/index.php?option=com\\_remository&Itemid=247&func=startdown&id=12](http://www.cstda.net/index.php?option=com_remository&Itemid=247&func=startdown&id=12))

- **K-12 and Community College Districts** provide educational services at the local level. School districts receive funding from the state (including the state lottery), local sources, and the federal government.<sup>3</sup>

There are 14 cities and 6 counties wholly or partially located within the Legal Delta, as shown in Table L-1 below.

**Table L-1 Cities and Counties within the Legal Delta**

<b><u>Delta Cities</u></b>	<b><u>Delta Counties</u></b>
Antioch	Alameda
Brentwood	Contra Costa
Isleton	Sacramento
Lathrop	San Joaquin
Lodi	Solano
Manteca	Yolo
Oakley	
Pittsburg	
Rio Vista	
Sacramento	
Stockton	
Tracy	
West Sacramento	
Galt PD	
Lathrop PD	

With no incorporated cities within the Primary Zone, these rural areas receive services from a wide assortment of service providers, as shown in Table L-2 below.<sup>4</sup> It is common for service providers from outside the Primary Zone may provide backup support for large-scale incidents.

**Table L-2 Government Service Providers in the Legacy Communities and Delta Primary Zone**

<b>Primary Zone County</b>	<b>Law Enforcement</b>	<b>Fire Protection/ First Responders</b>	<b>Schools</b>
Sacramento County	Sacramento County Sheriff Isleton Police Department	River Delta Fire District Courtland Fire Department	River Delta School District
Yolo County	Yolo County Sheriff	Clarksburg Fire Protection District	River Delta School District
San Joaquin County	San Joaquin County Sheriff	Montezuma Fire Protection District	Tracy Unified School District Lincoln Unified
Solano County	Solano County Sheriff	Rio Vista Fire Department	Farifield Suisun Unified
Contra Costa County	Contra Costa County Sheriff	East Contra Costa Fire Protection District	Knightsen Elementary School District Liberty Union High School District Oakley Union Elementary

<sup>3</sup> Timar, 2006 ([http://irepp.stanford.edu/documents/GDF/STUDIES/02-Timar/2-Timar\(3-07\).pdf](http://irepp.stanford.edu/documents/GDF/STUDIES/02-Timar/2-Timar(3-07).pdf))

<sup>4</sup> This assessment focuses on Legacy Communities, which are in unincorporated Sacramento and Yolo, plus Isleton, which is an incorporated city but is located outside the Primary Zone.

Source: Economic & Planning Systems, Inc.

In the Secondary Zone, cities generally handle their own police and fire protection. School districts provide educational services throughout the Legal Delta. In unincorporated areas, law enforcement services are generally provided by the county Sheriff's offices, and fire protection/first response services are generally provided by small (largely volunteer) regional fire protection districts. Table L-3 presents a list of service providers within the geographic range of the secondary zone.

**Table L-3Public Safety Service Providers-Secondary Delta**

<b>Police</b>	<b>Fire</b>
Contra Costa County Sheriff	Stockton Fire Department
Alameda County Sheriff	Tracy Fire Department
Sacramento County Sheriff	Thornton Fire District
Yolo County Sheriff	Contra Costa County Fire Protection District
San Joaquin County Sheriff	Cosumnes Fire Department
Solano County Sheriff	Lathrop Manteca Fire District
Sacramento PD	Cal Fire SCU (Tracy)
Rio Vista PD	Rio Vista Fire Department
Stockton PD	City of West Sacramento Fire Department
Elk Grove PD	East Contra Costa Fire Protection District
Antioch PD	Montezuma Hills Fire District
Pittsburg PD	Ryer Island Fire Protection District
Tracy PD	
Galt PD	
Lathrop PD	

Sources: various police/ sheriff departments, fire districts, and [firedepartmentdirectory.com](http://firedepartmentdirectory.com)

## **Public Services in the Legacy Communities**

Due to the scale and complexity of government services in the Delta, this chapter focuses on public services provided by Sacramento and Yolo Counties, with emphasis on assessing service levels in the Legacy Communities.

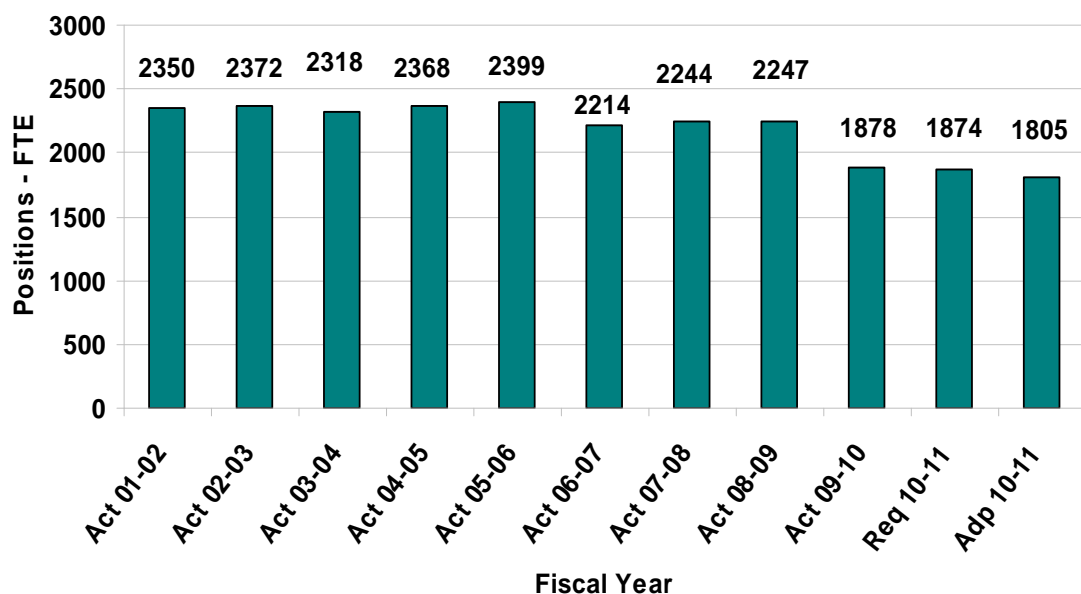
### **Law Enforcement and Emergency Response Services**

County sheriff's departments provide police protection and public safety services to unincorporated county areas in the Delta. In addition to traditional crime prevention, patrol, and detective services, each of the counties in the Legacy Delta also maintain marine divisions which patrol the waterways. Since these County sheriff's departments are responsible for providing protection for very large areas and population bases, it is very difficult to distinguish the budgetary issues that are specific to the small Delta communities. However, interviews with the various staff have provided a basic overview of the staffing requirements and service provision issues for the rural Delta areas.

## Sacramento County Sheriff's Department

In Sacramento County, the Sheriff's Department is responsible for public protection and support services, field investigations, and correctional and court services. The Sacramento County Sheriff's Department has a total adopted annual budget amount of \$330.4 million for the 2010/11 fiscal year, which is approximately 5 percent higher than the previous year's actual budget. Nearly 80 percent of this budget is allocated to employee salaries and benefits. County-wide, the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department is currently staffed with 1,805 positions. This staffing level is significantly fewer than five years earlier, as shown in Figure L-1 below.

Figure L-1 Sacramento County Sheriff's Department Staffing Trend



Source: Sacramento County

Although staffing levels are falling, crimes and calls for service are actually increasing. Calls for service increased by ten percent from Fiscal Year 2009/ 10 to Fiscal Year 2010/ 11, and violent crimes have increased 46 percent during this same period.<sup>5</sup> These trends suggest that staffing levels do not meet current requirements for service, and alternative methods of funding may need to be explored in the future in order to provide adequate police protection in Sacramento County.

The Sacramento County Sheriff's Florin Service Center serves all of South Sacramento, including the areas of the Primary and Secondary Zones of the Delta, and many of the Legacy Communities such as Courtland, Hood, Ryde, Locke, and Walnut Grove. There are 16 officers that patrol this area. recently reduced from 23 due to budget cuts. According to Sacramento County, these budget cuts have had an impact upon the ability to provide adequate service in the Delta regions of Sacramento County since this area is quite large<sup>6</sup>. Most of the crimes in the

<sup>5</sup> Violent crimes include homicide and assault with a deadly weapon. Information derived from Sacramento County Sheriff's Budget for Fiscal Year 11/12.

<sup>6</sup> Personal communication with Laura Grossman, Sacramento County Sheriff Crime Prevention Specialist (September 2, 2011).

Delta are similar to the types of crimes observed throughout Sacramento County. However, there are a high number of drowning incidents in the Delta due to the presence of major waterways.<sup>7</sup>

The Sacramento County Sheriff's Office also operates a Marine Enforcement Unit that patrols the Sacramento River and other navigable waterways of Sacramento County. This patrol unit is currently operating on an annual budget allocation of approximately \$405,000 (FY 2010/ 11), which funds the salary of 4 full-time staff members (the department also uses retired deputies on an on-call basis). The Marine Enforcement Unit is funded through state grants, and is responsible for patrolling Delta waterways in Sacramento County. These duties include enforcing boating safety laws, providing educational enforcement, and removing abandoned vessels.

### Yolo County Sheriff-Coroner

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In Yolo County, the Sheriff-Coroner's Department provides police patrol services, animal shelter/ control, the County Coroner's section, and the operation of the county detention facilities. The Sheriff-Coroner Department has a recommended total budget amount of \$26.5 million for the 2010/ 11 fiscal year, which is 7 percent lower than the prior year. Nearly 85 percent of this budget is allocated to salaries and benefits, which funds 243 of the total 267 authorized positions in the Department. The Sheriff-Coroner Department is funded through a variety of sources, including charges for services, state/ federal grants, public safety sales tax, and local general fund appropriations (which are comprised primarily of property tax and sales tax).<sup>8</sup>

The Yolo County Sheriff-Coroner department currently has 54 total positions, including 39 funded positions for patrol officers. The number of funded positions has been reduced over the past few years due to departmental budget cuts. However, 5 officers will be added to the department in October 2011 due to AB 109, which requires the transfer of prison inmates from state to county jails. The additional officers will be funded with a dedicated portion of state sales tax revenue and Vehicle License Fees (VLF), as outlined in trailer bills AB 118 and SB 89.

There is one resident deputy and an additional general patrol deputy assigned to the Clarksburg area.<sup>9</sup> There is always at least one deputy on duty in the Clarksburg area. In recent years, two resident deputies patrolled this area. However, one of these resident deputies was reassigned to general patrol as a cost-cutting measure. Typical crimes in the Clarksburg area include stolen car abandonments and trespassing (typically fishermen on levees). There recently have been a high number of copper thefts at the irrigation pumps in Clarksburg, but this has been seen throughout the county as well.<sup>10</sup>

Yolo County also operates a Marine Patrol unit which is currently staffed by two full-time officers and six volunteer patrol personnel. The Marine Patrol unit is primarily funded through a grant by the US Department of Boating and Waterways, although some County general fund revenue is generally allocated in normal budget years. Currently, staffing levels are reduced due to budgetary constraints.

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<sup>7</sup> Personal communication with Laura Grossman, Sacramento County Sheriff Crime Prevention Specialist (September 2, 2011).

<sup>8</sup> Yolo County Budget, Fiscal Year 2010/ 11.

<sup>9</sup> Personal communication with Yolo County Sheriff Lieutenant Martin Torres (September 8, 2011).

<sup>10</sup> Personal communication with Yolo County Sheriff Lieutenant Martin Torres (September 8, 2011).

## Other Law Enforcement Service Providers

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In addition to County services, Cities in the Delta provide services to residents and offer supplemental backup public safety and police protection on an as-needed basis. Isleton has its own small police department, which is funded through general fund appropriations and grants from the state. The police department currently has 2 funded officers and 5 reserves. The number of funded officers has decreased from 6 over the past few years due to budget reductions. Representatives from the Isleton police department have remarked that officers work 12 hour shifts and with only 2 officers, there are not enough officers to cover all of the shifts when the reserves are unavailable.<sup>11</sup> In addition, the City of Rio Vista has indicated that City services are sometimes extended to underserved areas of the Delta

## Fire Protection/ First Response

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The rural nature of the Delta does not necessitate the need for urban levels of fire protection services, and the fire protection responsibilities are distributed to several small fire protection districts that are spread throughout the Delta region.

### Clarksburg Fire Protection/ First Responders

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Fire Protection, emergency response, and emergency flood protection services in the Clarksburg area are provided by the Clarksburg Fire Protection District Department, which has 7 staff members and 20 volunteers. According to representatives of the district, this level of staffing appears to be adequate at the current time, but up to twice this many employees could be needed by 2020, given increasing activity on Delta roads and waterways.<sup>12</sup> The Clarksburg Fire Protection District is largely funded by property taxes and fire suppression assessments, although grants and fundraisers also augment funding for the district.

### River Delta Fire District

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Originally formed in 1941 as the Isleton Fire District, the River Delta Fire District was re-established in May 2004. The River Delta Fire District boundary covers approximately 15 square miles which centers on the community of Isleton and also includes Oxbow Marina, Tyler Island, Grand Island, and a large portion of Brannon Island. This service area is comprised of approximately 1,500 full-time residents, which can swell to 15,000 people in the summer months as visitors come to the area for recreational purposes.

The district functions as a volunteer station, and there are currently 28 volunteers, which allows the department to be staffed 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Typical calls for service include structure fires, vehicle fires, grass fires, boat fires, medical calls, vehicle accidents, floods, levee breaks, etc. The district responds to approximately 325 emergency calls per year.

### Courtland Fire Department

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Established in 1942, the Courtland Fire Department is a long-standing local institution in Courtland. It is governed by a 3-member Board of Directors who are elected to 4-year terms. The Courtland Fire Department boundary covers over 33 square miles, which is comprised of over 2,500 citizens in the rural areas of Sacramento County. The Courtland Fire Department also provides mutual assistance to Elk Grove, Walnut Grove, and Sacramento. The Courtland Fire Department maintains two fire stations, one located in Courtland and the other in Hood.

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<sup>11</sup> Personal communication with Linda Garcia, Isleton Police Department (September 2, 2011).

<sup>12</sup> Clarksburg Fire Protection District (<http://clarksburgfire.com/>).

The Courtland Fire Department has over 22 uniformed volunteer firefighters who provide fire protection services such as fire suppression, emergency medical services, hazardous materials mitigation, fire prevention, training and public education, and apparatus maintenance. The Courtland Fire Department is primarily funded by property tax revenue.

### Other Fire Suppression/ First Responders

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In addition to the fire districts within the Primary Zone described above, nearby cities such as West Sacramento, Rio Vista, and others provide relief fire suppression and emergency services when warranted. The Rio Vista Fire District currently has 6 full-time positions funded, and approximately 18 volunteers/reserves. The fire district covers 38 square miles, which includes Brannan Island, Twitchell Island, and Sherman Island. The fire district is primarily funded through the City of Rio Vista general fund, although the city also receives funding from the Delta Fire Protection District. The Delta Fire Protection District contracts with the City of Rio Vista to provide fire services. Most of the calls that the Rio Vista Fire District receives for the Delta are water-related injuries.

### Educational Services

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The River Delta School District provides educational services for a large portion of the Primary Zone, including all of the Legacy Communities. The district's boundaries include portions of Yolo, Sacramento, and Solano counties. Students who reside in other areas of the Primary Zone (in either San Joaquin or Contra Costa counties) generally attend schools in one of the following districts:

- Tracy Unified
- Stockton Unified
- Lodi Unified
- Lincoln Unified
- Manteca Unified

The River Delta School District is currently comprised of 10 schools, including 5 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, 2 high schools, and 1 high / elementary (alternative school). These schools are located in the following Delta communities:

- Clarksburg
- Courtland
- Walnut Grove
- Isleton
- Rio Vista

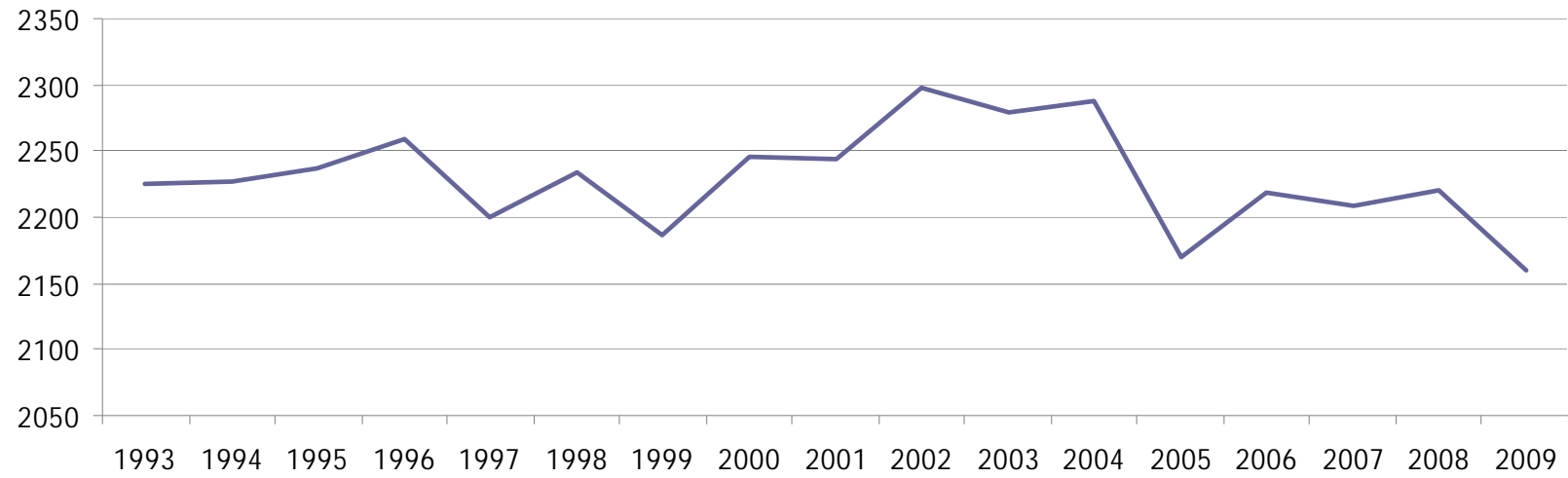
### Enrollment

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The River Delta School District has seen fluctuations in enrollment over the past twenty years; however, enrollment has generally ranged between 2,150 and 2,300 students. According to school district representatives, the current enrollment for the River Delta Unified School District is 2,020, the lowest level in the district's recent history. This trend is consistent with socioeconomic analysis presented in Chapter 2, which identified that population growth in the Primary Zone is flat and the existing households are aging.



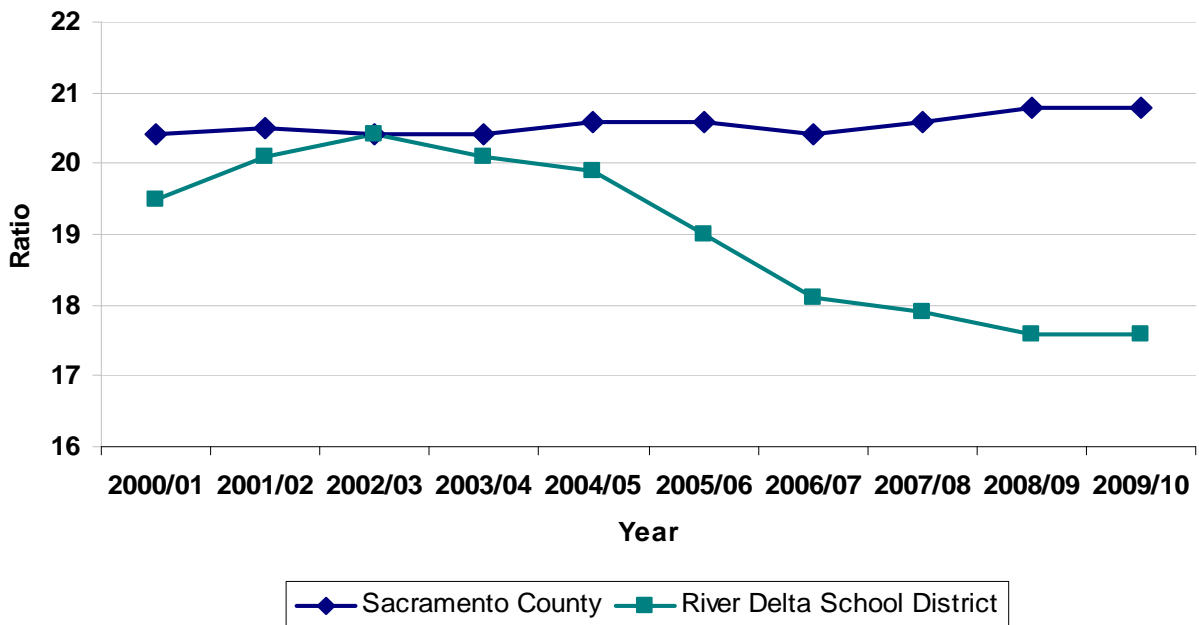
**Figure L-2 River Delta Unified Enrollment Trend**



## Performance Indicators

The River Delta School District has a very good reputation for educational quality and civic contribution within the district's small, close-knit community. However, declining enrollment, school closures, and recent performance statistics indicate potential concerns. According to the California Department of Education, the River Delta School District has among the lowest Academic Performance Index (API) scores in the region, substantially lower than those in California overall. However, the student-teacher ratios in River Delta indicate a well-staffed district. The figure below shows student-teacher ratios at River Delta, as compared to the rest of Sacramento County. As shown, the student-teacher ratios were similar until 2002/03, at which point the student-teacher ratios at River Delta began to decline, indicating more teachers were available to students. This ratio was last reported at approximately 18 students per teacher, among the lowest in the Sacramento region.

Figure L-3 Student-Teacher Ratios, River Delta School District and Sacramento County



In 2005, the Clarksburg elementary school closed and then reopened several years later as a charter school. The new school is included in the River Delta School District budget but operates largely autonomously. The Delta Elementary Charter School serves the communities of Clarksburg and West Sacramento.